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agricultural SITUATION

the crop reporters magazine

U.S. Department of Agriculture Statistical Reporting Service June 1971

FEEDING: A BIGGER BITE OF WHEAT



FEEDING:

A BIGGER BITE OF WHEAT

With livestock and poultry output gaining faster than feed grain supplies, U.S. farmers are feeding more wheat than they have since the 1930's and 1940's.

Favorable price ratios between wheat and other feeds during 1967-69 helped spark the recent interest in wheat as a livestock feed. And last year blight-reduced corn supplies made wheat even more attractive.

From an average of 110 million bushels yearly in 1964-68, wheat feeding swelled to over 215 million bushels in 1969. And in the feed year ending June 30, 1971, use may reach 235 million bushels. That's more than 17 percent of 1970's estimated production, and over 10 percent of the total supply (production plus carryover).

Hard red winter wheat will probably run ahead of other kinds of feed use this year, because it's in large supply.

Why are farmers feeding more wheat? Prices, chiefly.

Recent changes in government loan rates established a base price for wheat that was competitive with corn, sorghum, and other feed grains—when the protein content of wheat is taken into account.

But in July-September 1970, for example, wheat was 24¢ per 100 pounds cheaper than corn when adjusted for feed value. A year previous, wheat's cost advantage over all feed grains ranged from 1¢ for oats to 21¢ for corn.

With narrower wheat/feed grain spreads, many of the larger feedlot operators began to feed wheat. However, wheat feeding on farms where the

crop is grown hasn't caught on nearly as fast. Many farmers who grow wheat and also keep livestock as a sideline traditionally sell wheat as a food crop even when wheat prices hit purchased feed grain levels.

Here's a rundown, based on many different USDA feeding tests, of how wheat rates as a feed for various livestock:

Beef cattle: Pound for pound, some varieties of wheat contain 100 to 120 percent of the protein value of corn, and sometimes as high as 130 percent the protein value of sorghum. Wheat's high protein content usually reduces the amount of protein supplement needed in a grain ration.

USDA researchers have found best results are obtained when coarse ground or pelleted wheat is limited to around half the grain in the ration. Soft wheat fosters the greatest gains—apparently because of its lower gluten content than hard wheat.

One major drawback which researchers have revealed is that cattle sometimes get digestive disorders when wheat ferments in their stomachs. Mixing the ration with other cereal grains or roughage helps to prevent such disorders.

Dairy cows: In recent tests, dairy cows consumed more than 22 pounds of rolled or pelleted wheat per day without digestive disorders, after the cows had adjusted to concentrate mixtures containing up to 95-percent wheat.

Tests have also been run indicating wheat can be used as the sole cereal grain in a concentrate for lactating cows. However, fewer problems arose when wheat formed less than 65 percent of the mixture.

Swine: USDA feeding trials indicate wheat has about the same nourishment for swine as corn or sorghum and the animals found wheat highly palatable. In fact, they may overeat, get digestive upsets, and then refuse feed. Consequently, the researchers found it necessary to mix wheat with less favored grains to prevent gorging.



Swine eat wheat coarse ground or pelleted.

Sheep: Wheat is equal to corn or sorghum in food value when mixed with other grains. Studies show it does not need to be ground for hand feeding to breeding ewes or fed lambs, but it should be coarse ground for older ewes.

Chickens: For animal performance, wheat is equal to corn or milo in layer rations, when mixed with other grains. It provides chickens with the same digestible nutrients as corn, but more and higher quality protein.

However, chickens need sulphur amino acids, methionine, lysine, and other elements, which they can't get from wheat. The element shortcomings of wheat were overcome by USDA researchers with the use of feed supplements or mixtures of other grains.

Wheat has not proved as effective as corn in broiler rations due to energy differences between the two grains.

Turkeys: In feeding tests, turkeys show a fondness for wheat over other cereal grains. However, the birds could eat only coarsely ground or rolled wheat

because flour or finely ground wheat caused beak impaction and lowered weight gains.

Horses: Rolled or pelleted wheat proved a high energy feed ingredient when mixed with other grains.

SRS WHEAT REPORTS

All Wheat

Production, Farm Use, Sales,
Value, by States (May)

Agricultural Prices (monthly)

Stocks of Grain in All Positions
(quarterly)

Annual Summary

(December 10)

Winter Wheat

Winter Wheat Report (December 22)

Monthly Crop Reports (May
through September)

Durum and Other Spring Wheat
Prospective Plantings (mid-March)

Monthly Crops Reports (July
through October)

THE HOUSE CROP

Passing through Mercer County, Pa., in the early 1960's, a real estate developer noticed a strip of farmland along the banks of Coolspring Creek.

It wasn't choice farmland—in fact, some of it was lying idle. The bottomland along the creek bed was wet and swampy while the uplands were mostly open fields with some brush.

However, the developer wasn't looking at the land with farming in mind. Rather, he visualized the creek dammed to create a lake that would be the nucleus of a vacation home community for residents of nearby Pittsburgh, Pa., and Youngstown, Ohio.

Lake Latonka—a 1,600-lot recreation subdivision surrounding a 270-acre lake—was the end result of the developer's dream. However, this Pennsylvania community is only one of many second-home communities which have been springing up across the country.

Here's how Lake Latonka affected Mercer and neighboring counties.

In all, developing the lake called for expenditures of about \$7 million: \$0.5 million to buy the land from 16 local owners; \$2 million to contour the site, dam the creek, lay the roads, etc.; \$1.5 million for management and promotion; \$3 million for home construction by some of the 1,300 new lot owners.

However, that \$7 million swelled into an estimated \$14-million of gross business activity during the first 5 years of the project's development—of which \$2.5 to \$4 million accrued to Mercer and two nearby counties.

On top of this money, the new Lake Latonka home owners probably spent an additional \$2.9 million on "use" activities—\$0.8 million for recreation equipment; \$0.5 million for home furnishings; and \$1.6 million for other personal property items.

The impact of this \$2.9-million expenditure on "use" items was worth an estimated \$5.8 million in total busi-

ness activity. An estimated \$2.5 to \$3 million of this may have accrued to the local area.

Local lenders supplied a good deal of the money that went into Lake Latonka's development—77 percent of the money borrowed to buy lots and 52 percent of the funds borrowed to build homes. Interest income on these loans added at least \$0.5 million to local coffers through 1970.

The financing activities also appeared to drain local stocks of loanable funds by as much as \$1.5 to \$2 million at one point between 1966 and 1968. But these stocks were expected to be replenished as the notes and mortgages were repaid.

The Lake Latonka community more than doubled the tax base of the two rural townships in which the project lies—although it boosted the total tax base of Mercer County by about 1 percent during the first 5 years.

Coolspring and Jackson Townships, for example, collected approximately \$50,000 in 1967 without an increase in the 1965 tax rate. By 1970 the Latonka development had added \$1.8 to \$2 million to the assessed valuation of county real estate, increasing tax collections \$0.1 to \$0.2 million annually, on the basis of 1965 tax rates.

What were the drawbacks in Lake Latonka's development?

The community itself is supposed to provide for all services except gas, electric, and telephone utilities. However, it was too soon to tell in the 1965–70 time period whether these services will be adequate.

No provision was made within the community for schooling for Lake Latonka children, since the development was conceived of as a second-home community. By 1975 or 1980 the demand for educational services could pose a problem for adjacent communities if Lake Latonka becomes a residential community and fails to provide for its own needs internally.

BE IT ENACTED . . .



Public Law 91-524
91st Congress, H. R. 18546
November 30, 1970

An Act

To establish improved programs for the benefit of producers and consumers of dairy products, wool, wheat, feed grains, cotton, and other commodities, to extend the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, as amended, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Agricultural Act of 1970".

Here's a report of developments to date under the 1970 Farm Act.

Sign-ups in the 1971 wheat and feed grain programs were heavy, while cotton lagged.

By the time the 6-week enrollment period closed April 9, the totals were as follows: 1,037,446 signed wheat farms with 18,219,491 base acres; 1,759,315 feed grain farms with 93,386,000 base acres; and 297,208 signed cotton farms with allotments of 9,981,388 base acres.

Enrollment in the 1971 wheat program is up slightly from last year in the major wheat producing areas. In

the eastern United States, where participation in wheat programs has traditionally been low, the number of farms entered and the acreage enrolled is sharply higher.

On the feed grain front, 9 percent more farms are enrolled in the 1971 program than a year ago. The base acreage on corn-sorghum farms enrolled is up 18 percent.

Cotton is a different story, however. Only 94 percent of the acreage was signed this year, compared with 96 percent in 1970, for the same period.

"Set aside" as a method of cropland

retirement is vastly different from the "diversion" used in previous programs.

Gone are crop-by-crop planting limits. Instead the 1970 Agricultural Act provides for a single set-aside of acreage that a participating farmer agrees to keep out of production.

Once he's done that, a farmer can plant whatever crop he wishes on his remaining acres. (The only exceptions are the crops that remain under quota because of different legislation—rice, tobacco, sugarcane, peanuts, and extra-long staple cotton.)

Farmers who signed up in the 1971 wheat, feed grain, and cotton programs can get commodity loans on all their production of those crops plus price support payments on part of their crops.

(Under the 1965 farm act, producers were allowed to substitute between wheat and feed grains. But if they grew all of one crop and none of the other, they were ineligible for price support payments on the crop not grown.)

The March planting intentions report indicated that the 1970 Farm Act may cut farm production costs by enabling crops to be grown in the lowest-cost production areas.

For example, the March report shows farmers in the Northern Plains and Pacific Northwest are getting out of oat production, to some extent, and back into the wheat and barley business where they've traditionally held a comparative advantage over other sections of the country.

The previous farm program had resulted in larger oat output up in these regions since oats were often the only crop farmers could fall back on when they'd exhausted their wheat and feed grain allotments.

But this year farmers in Minnesota, the Nation's No. 1 oat State, planned to cut oat acreage by 246,000 acres and to up their wheat area by 479,000 acres and their barley land by 200,000 acres.

In North Dakota, the second largest oat producer, intended oat acreage dropped 348,000 acres while wheat

and barley acreage rose 863,000 and 163,000 acres, respectively.

Not a single Northern Plains or Pacific Northwest State showed any increase in intended oat acreage this year, while all the States recorded sizable gains in wheat and barley areas.

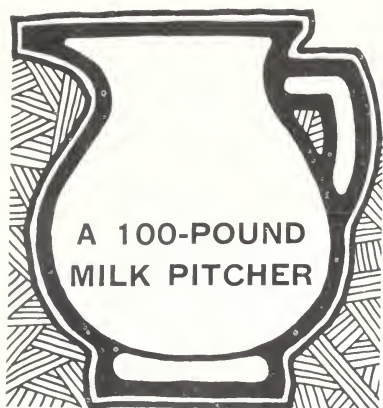
There's no indication yet whether Corn Belt farmers will back away from wheat production now that the present farm program allows them more freedom of choice. The March report included only spring wheat intentions and the Corn Belt is a soft red winter wheat area. But of all the alternative crops midwestern producers have to choose from, wheat is one of the least profitable.

Midwest farmers *are* going very heavily to corn and soybeans. In parts of the Corn Belt where blight was no problem last year, 1971 corn acreage will be up sharply. Iowa, the No. 1 corn State in 1970, plans an additional 1,280,000 acres. Of other leading States, Nebraska will add 609,000 acres; and Minnesota is planning 848,000 more acres.

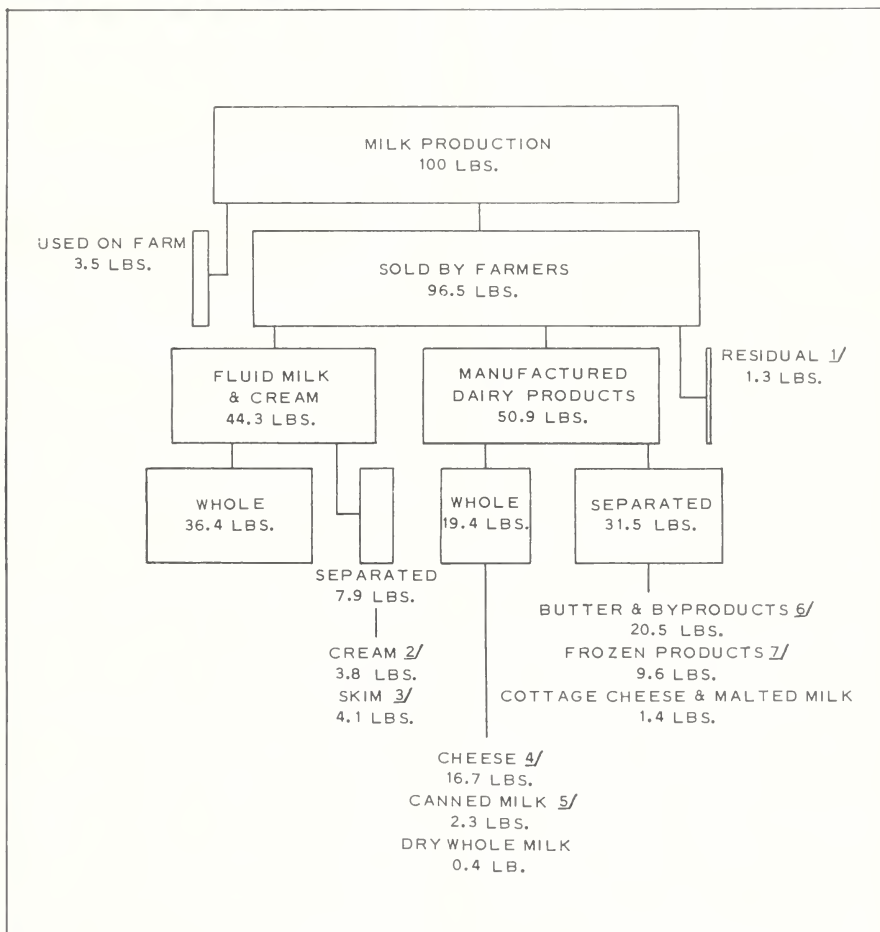
Midwestern soybean increases are centered in blight areas. Illinois, the Nation's second largest corn producer, will have 209,000 fewer corn acres this year—but soybean plantings are to go up 830,000 acres. Indiana's soybean plantings will be up 333,000 acres and several other States will see increases of 100,000 acres or more.

USDA officials also expected the 1970 Farm Act would cause an increase in soybean acreage in the mid-South and Southeast and some expansion of cotton production in the most efficient production regions in the Delta States and Texas. The March planting intentions report bore out these expectations.

Farmers were allowed to plant some 22 million acres more this year than last under government programs—but the March intentions report showed only about 11.5 million of these acres were coming back into crop production. Apparently farmers weren't interested in cropping the remainder even at current strong price levels.



WHERE DOES 100 POUNDS OF MILK GO? Some 44 out of every 100 pounds of milk produced last year were consumed in fluid form; another 51 pounds went into manufactured dairy products such as cheese, canned milk, dry whole milk, butter, and frozen products. The remainder was either used on the farm or in minor miscellaneous ways.



- 1/ MINOR MISCELLANEOUS USES.
 2/ MIXTURES, EGGNOG, LIGHT AND HEAVY, AND SOUR CREAM.
 3/ PLAIN SOLIDS ADDED, FLAVORED BUTTERMILK.
 4/ AMERICAN ITALIAN, SWISS, CREAM, OTHER, WHEY BUTTER, DRIED WHEY.
 5/ EVAPORATED, SWEETENED, CONDENSED.
 6/ BUTTER, INCLUDING USE IN FROZEN DESSERTS, NONFAT DRY MILK, DRY BUTTERMILK.
 7/ ICE CREAM, ICE MILK, SHERBERT, MELLORINE, BULK CONDENSED.

FRUIT FORTUNES

Fruit production circa 1980: bigger output, especially of citrus . . . more mechanization . . . fewer but larger farms . . . greater grower/shipper integration.

There's nothing dramatic about this prediction. Economists with USDA's Economic Research Service are looking forward pretty much to the continuation of trends prevailing in the past 2 decades.

Fruit output gets bigger just about every year. It's up from an average 16.3 million tons in 1950-52 to 20.6 million tons in 1967-69. The big gainer during that time was citrus, chalking up a 43-percent rise to 10.4 million tons.

This decade the ERS men see citrus output climbing another 30 to 35 percent. Deciduous fruit production is also slated to grow, but probably not as fast as population.

Machines are no longer a rarity but the rule in many types of fruit production. Tree shakers together with catching frames are in widespread use for cherries, plums, and prunes. Too, growers nowadays use bulk containers, straddle carriers, fork trucks, and other mechanical aids to cut down on labor.

Nobody looks for labor to get any less expensive in the 1970's so greater substitution of machines for men is pretty much a foregone conclusion.

Fruit farm numbers aren't bucking any trends—they're down in line with the overall drop in U.S. farm numbers. Census data showed 225,000 fruit farms in 1964 compared with 335,000 in 1954. Meanwhile, though, the proportion of farms over 20 acres grew to 18 percent from 10 percent.

ERS economists look for further consolidation in farms by 1980 with more of the output concentrated in larger commercial holdings.

Grower/shipper integration is one likely outcome of the trend toward larger, more commercialized, more specialized farms. The men who run these kinds of operations may well expand

into shipping to improve their economic position. Likewise, large shippers may integrate with growers during the decade. Either way, 1980 should see more grower/shipper-shipper/grower firms.

The big citrus States—Florida, California, Texas, and Arizona—are expected to continue top producers because of their climate.

Through the 1970's, Florida's citrus crops will probably expand faster than California's as the new trees planted in the Sunshine State after the severe 1962 freeze approach their productivity peak. The total Florida orange crop in 1980 could run about 40 percent above the 1969 level.

It's expected the West Coast will continue to dominate the deciduous scene—with California leading and probably increasing its share of the market.

Apple output is expected to outpace population increases this decade; the dwarf and semidwarf trees planted of late are likely to have greater per acre production potentials. Up, too, will be the output of peaches, grapes, and pears—but not as much as population.

No forecast of fruit's future can fail to note the dominance of processing in today's—and doubtless tomorrow's—market.

Presently about two-thirds of the fruit is processed, in contrast to 55 percent in the early 1950's. Canning is far and away the leading method, but freezing is becoming more important yearly. In fact, ERS economists look for freezing to grow faster than canning in the course of the decade.

Two new techniques which promise to stimulate further use of processed items both are outgrowths of the freezing process. The first, freeze drying, is commonly used to process berries and other fruits for use by bakeries and food manufacturers. The other, even newer method, is dehydrofreezing which removes water before freezing to reduce weight and bulk. Dehydrofreezing, according to the economists, is potentially a very big outlet for fruit.



Canned peaches are in the peachiest position in the crop's processed lineup—with demand on the increase and use projected to hit a record 1.9 billion pounds (fresh weight) by 1980—34 percent more than in 1968.

Already peaches lead the U.S. canned fruit pack as the following table for 1969 (latest data available) shows:

	<i>Million cases¹</i>
Peaches	37.6
(Clingstone)	31.5
(Freestone)	6.1
Pineapple	16.9
Applesauce	16.8
Fruit Cocktail	16.7
Pears	10.6

¹ Each case equals 24 #2½ cans.

And canned peaches are even more popular than the pack schedule makes it appear at first glance. Peaches also must comprise 30 to 50 percent of canned fruit cocktail by Food and Drug standards.

Despite the high count for canned peaches, per capita peach eating is

trending down because of a fall-off in U.S. consumption of fresh and dried peaches. By 1980, per capita use is projected to be down to 12.1 pounds from 14.2 pounds in 1969. However, use of canned peaches should advance to 6.4 pounds—up from 5.8 pounds in 1969.

Total U.S. production for fresh use and processing (canned, frozen, dried) averaged 3.2 billion pounds a year during 1959–68.

California orchards accounted for 60 percent of total peach production, South Carolina for a 10-percent share and Georgia for 6 percent.

The West grows nearly all peaches for processing—93 percent during 1959–68. The South leads in production for the fresh market and supplied half the U.S. total in the decade. But, the South also is evidencing a growing interest in developing the processing market for peaches.

PEACHY SHOWERS

Sauna baths for peaches? Plums? Nectarines? No. But steam baths and hot showers may be just what are needed to reduce the \$2 million annual bill in post-harvest peach, plum and nectarine decay, according to USDA tests. In these rugged tests, roughly 37 percent of the peach crop is ruined after harvest by decay-causing molds.

The most effective bathing method, and simplest to set up commercially, USDA scientists note, is a hot water dip, where the fruit is immersed in (125° F.) circulating water for 1½ to 3 minutes. The result? Less than 8 percent post-harvest loss.

Another peachy bath that kills the molds involves a hot shower treatment. When hot water is sprayed on the fruit at the rate of 15 gallons a minute per square foot of tank, postharvest spoilage is reduced to only 11 percent.

The "steam bath," when 110°F. moist air is circulated in a tank at 500–600 cubic feet a minute for about a half-hour, is slightly less effective than the other methods. Steam cuts decay back to 17 to 24 percent.



SPOTLIGHT ON NEVADA

Nevada's "A, B, Cs" stand for alfalfa, beef, and climate. Here's how Ray Pallesen, Statistician in Charge of the Nevada Crop and Livestock Reporting Service explains it:

"Our farmers earned \$80.5 million in cash receipts from farming in 1970 and about 65 percent came from cattle and calves; hay sales, mostly alfalfa, accounted for half the income from crops. And the climate here, dry and smog-free with abundant sunshine, is acting like a lure to several producer groups."

Pallesen points out that livestock production is a natural in a State with 85 percent of the land under government control. Ranchers graze their stock by permit. Nevada livestock (not including poultry) had a farm value of \$124.6 million at the start of this year, a 4-percent increase from 1970. Cattle and calves made up over \$118 million, with sheep and lambs worth about \$6.1 million.

There's been an expansion during recent years of cattle feedlot operations, both finishing out cattle for slaughter and in "warm-up" conditioning. For example, the number of cattle and calves in Nevada feedlots totaled 75,000 on January 1, 1971. That's not many by some States' standards but it's still a significant increase from numbers 5 years ago.

Pallesen says cash receipts from cattle and calves hit \$52 million in 1970.

Dovetailing nicely with Nevada's livestock industry is its healthy output of hay, particularly alfalfa. No other

State devotes as high a percentage of its cropland to hay and forage crops as does Nevada. In 1970, some 448,000 acres out of a total of 511,000 harvested acres were in hay. The crop was valued at about \$22 million, while production of all crops in the State was worth just \$30 million (not counting government payments).

Nevada alfalfa, high in protein and an ideal feed, was harvested from 167,000 acres and was valued at \$15.2 million. Much was used in the State, but shipments to California have increased lately.

Alfalfa seed has recently found a place within the State's agriculture, too. During the past decade, Nevada has boosted output of this commodity from virtually nothing to over 8 million pounds in 1970 making the State the No. 5 producer.

There are many other diversified agricultural products in Nevada, including garlic for seed in the Yerington and Lovelock areas; potatoes and onions near Yerington; lettuce, green onions, radishes, and tomato plants in Moapa Valley; and cotton in Pahrump Valley. Nevada is also known for its Fallon cantaloupes.

New frontiers of agricultural endeavor lie before the State in its miles and miles of undeveloped valleys. Though water is precious and rainfall very limited, the supply of irrigation water is generally good. Plus these areas enjoy excellent climates for growing various crops, and are relatively disease free because of their distance from population centers.

Studies are underway to see how well grass seed can be produced in these valleys. Also, there's interest in developing a greenhouse industry.

In the 48 contiguous States, only Rhode Island has fewer farms than Nevada. But what this seventh largest State lacks in quantity is certainly made up for in size. The State's 9 million acres in farms and ranches are held by 2,000 operators which means the average unit runs 4,500 acres. The national average is 400.



At home on the range, Nevada cattle graze in a valley near the Ruby Mountains. Cattle produce nearly two-thirds of the Silver State's cash farm income. High quality alfalfa not only supports the State's cattle industry, it's also the most valuable crop.



ag outlook

Digested from outlook reports of the Economic Research Service.
Forecasts based on information available through May 1, 1971

THE GREAT UNKNOWN . . . First 1971 corn production forecast, by States, will be made in August. If last year's yields are repeated, the 71.5 million acres farmers intend to plant would mean a crop 7% larger than last year. A more normal growing season in the Western Corn Belt could mean a 10% rise in output.

●
SORGHUMS . . . With a near normal growing season, farmers will probably harvest around 900 million bushels of sorghum from 16 million acres. A crop this size would be fully adequate to meet U.S. needs, provide for exports, and add something to the carryover. Carryover next October 1 will probably be around 150 million bushels, the lowest in 14 years.

●
SOYBEAN OUTLOOK . . . The 1971 crop may be one-tenth larger than last year's 1.1 billion bushels, based on planting plans and normal yield trends. With a prospective 75 million bushels carried over next September, 1971/72 supplies may fall a little short of a year earlier.

●
SOYBEAN DEMAND . . . Soybean use is likely to continue large and requirements will have to be met from 1971 crop production. During the 1970/71 season, combined crushings, exports, seed and feed use will total an estimated 1.3 billion bushels—14% more than last season.

●
PRICE BOOST . . . Reduced supplies and strong demand boosted soybean prices in September–February 20% above last year. Prices will continue strong throughout the remainder of 1970/71, averaging sharply above year-earlier levels.

●
COTTON CARRYOVER CUT . . . This August's carryover will likely be around 4½ million bales—the smallest in nearly two decades. That's quite a drop from 1969/70's 5¾-million bale carryover.

Mill use and exports are running so strong this year cotton demand is likely to exceed the 10.1 million bale crop of 1970 by 1 to 1½ million bales.

●
COTTON EXPORTS . . . We may ship 25% more bales of cotton overseas during 1970/71 than we did the year previous. Exports are likely to total 3½ million bales. Sharp production declines in Free-World countries have intensified demand. Output in these countries may be off 2½ million bales from 1969/70 due to lower acreages and yields in many areas.

●
STEADY COTTON . . . Cotton's share of the total U.S. fiber market remained near 40% in 1970, around the same portion as in 1969, despite a decline in total fiber use.

●
FROZEN TOO EARLY . . . Freezes caused Florida citrus prospects in March to drop about 5% below the February estimate, but the total citrus crop may still pick out 7% larger than the 1970 record breaker. The Florida orange crop—around ¾ of the Nation's total—is now estimated at 149 million boxes, 11 million below the February estimate.

●
ORANGES LESS JUICY . . . Processors are getting less for their squeezing from Florida oranges this year. The season average is projected at 1.21 gallons per box, compared with last year's 1.24. Yields have run from 1.13 to 1.36 gallons per box in recent years.

●
LESS IN MORE . . . Last year's cigarette output hit a record high—538 billion cigarettes, 4% more than in 1969. But the amount of tobacco used in cigarettes fell 2%, mainly because filter-tip cigarettes, which use less tobacco than nonfilters, rose to 80% of the total.

●
COWS DOWN, MILK UP . . . Milk cows on farms during March totaled over 12.4 million head, down 1% from a year earlier—the smallest drop in cow numbers in many a year. However, March milk production per cow was up 2% and total production up 1% to over 10.2 billion pounds.

●
FORGETTING YOUR GOAT . . . One-fifth of the mohair-yielding goats disappeared from Texas ranges in 1970. This abrupt drop in inventory accompanied low mohair prices last year. Average prices ran 39.1 per pound in 1970, down 26.0¢ per pound from the previous year. However, the price should firm up some this year. Price has been around 30¢ per pound since last fall, but with

prospects of reduced mohair production, prices may firm up in the months ahead.

FALL FARROWING FALL OFF . . . On the basis of current hog and corn prices, fewer sows will farrow in second half 1971. This would reduce hog slaughter in the first half of 1972.

EGGS . . . Prices weak as production continues high. Bigger supplies, smaller use of eggs by chick hatcheries, and larger supplies of high protein foods, such as pork, will work against egg prices this summer and hold them below the year-earlier average. However, stronger shell egg demand is coming from shell-egg breakers who supply egg products to bakeries, confectioners and institutions.

STATISTICAL BAROMETER

Item	1967	1970	Latest data available	
Prices received by farmers	100	108	112	Feb. 1971
Prices paid, interest, taxes, wage rates	100	109	118	Feb. 1971
Ratio ¹	100	99	95	Feb. 1971
Consumer price index, all items	100	116	119.8	Mar. 1971
Food	100	115	117.0	Mar. 1971
Agricultural exports (\$bil.)	6.4	7.2	0.7	Mar. 1971
Agricultural imports (\$bil.)	4.5	5.7	0.5	Mar. 1971
Disposable personal income (\$bil.)	546.3	684.7	696.9	(³)
Expenditures for food (\$bil.)	93.9	114.3	116.8	(³)
Share of income spent for food (percent)	17.2	16.7	16.8	(³)
Farm food market basket: ²				
Retail cost (\$)	1,080	1,225	1,215	Feb. 1971
Farm value (\$)	414	480	473	Feb. 1971
Farmers' share of retail cost (percent)	38	39	39	Feb. 1971
Realized gross farm income (\$bil.)	49.0	56.2	55.8	(³)
Production expenses (\$bil.)	34.8	40.4	40.9	(³)
Realized net farm income (\$bil.)	14.2	15.8	14.9	(³)

¹ Ratio of index of prices received by farmers to index of prices paid, interest, taxes, and farm wage rates.

² Average annual quantities per family and single person household bought by wage and clerical workers 1960-61 based on Bureau of Labor Statistics figures.

³ Annual rate, seasonally adjusted, fourth quarter 1970.

HELPING HUMPTY

Splat.

That's a nightmare sound to egg producers. And what's worse, super size eggs, which bring the best prices, break easiest.

Why? In a USDA study recently completed at Pennsylvania State University, researchers narrowed their sights on the high breakage rates of super size eggs.

They found:

—The extra-large and super sizes received more handling than smaller eggs—which is exactly what they don't need—both by producers and processors.

—Traditional case size and filler size do not suit jumbo sizes particularly well.

—Handling and packing equipment often are not scaled to accommodate the larger eggs.

Some other study findings that bear further investigation:

—Breakage climbs as the laying year progresses. Egg damage doubled and occasionally even quadrupled after April.

—The more extra large and jumbo eggs there are in a shipment, the higher the breakages for all classes of eggs.



HEY EWE!

Several surprised scientists and a frazzled ewe with quintuplets resulted from an estrus control experiment at Colorado State University.

Multiple births among sheep aren't rare, but five lambs at one time are.

The scientists were studying ways to produce two lamb crops a year, when the five were born last Thanksgiving night. (Autumn is usually the off-season for lambing.)

Prolific A-234, as the mother of the quint is known, received two hormone treatments, which may account for the size of her litter. All five lambs were all healthy and normal in size. However, since nature equipped Prolific A-234 to feed only two babies at a time, all received supplemental feedings of cows milk.

Of the other ewes in the test, half of them lambed last fall and 60 percent had multiple births.

AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

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Editor: Geraldine Schumacher

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